

JOSH GREEN, M.D.
Governor

SYLVIA LUKE
Lt. Governor



SHARON HURD
Chairperson, Board of Agriculture

DEXTER KISHIDA
Deputy to the Chairperson

State of Hawai'i
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
KA 'OIHANA MAHI'AI
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**TESTIMONY OF SHARON HURD
CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF AGRICULTURE**

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SYSTEMS

**FRIDAY, APRIL 12, 2024
10:00 AM
CONFERENCE ROOM 325**

**SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 129, SENATE DRAFT 1
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN
INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN.**

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 129, SD1 that requests the Department of Agriculture (Department) to establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group (Working Group). The Working Group is to be led by the Chairperson of the Board of Agriculture and the Director of the Department of Planning, Economic Development, and Tourism. The Department offers comments and has strong concerns.

The Working Group is requested to have 12 members (Page 2, lines 1-36). A single member of the House of Representatives and a single member of the Senate (to be selected by the House Speaker and the Senate President, respectively) are to collaboratively select and invite one representative with knowledge in the following general areas (Page 2, lines 23-36):



- (1) Food as a human right and healthy food for all;
- (2) Social equity and food justice;
- (3) Food system resilience;
- (4) Agriculture and food system sustainability;
- (5) Food at the center of a circular economy;
- (6) Sustainable education, workforce development, and fair labor; and
- (7) Good food governance

The Working Group is requested to develop an “Interagency Food Systems Plan” (Plan) that links to the United Nations “sustainable development goals”, identifies a “governance structure”, and a plan to implement the Plan.

The Plan and recommendations to implement the Plan are due to the 2025 Legislature. The Department is requested to provide administrative, and staff support to the Working Group and prepare the Plan.

The Department has strong concerns.

The Department is very concerned that there is no request to have agricultural operators or agricultural organizations represented on the Working Group. The Plan risks becoming an academic exercise without the full and sustained participation of local farmers who produce food that most, if not all, of the elements of the Plan will be based on. Further, despite earlier repeated requests by the Department for legislative guidance, there has been no attempt to define each of the seven broad areas that will be at the heart of the Plan. The utility of linking the eleven broad areas to the United

Nations sustainable development goals (Page 3, lines 11-32) is not clear. Further, the Plan is to identify a “governance structure” which is also not defined. (Page 3, line 5)

The Department is requested to “provide administrative and staff support to the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group, including the preparation of the interagency food systems plan” (Page 4, lines 2-4). The Department is very concerned about the duties to the Department in establishing the Working Group, addressing the eleven broad areas, writing the Plan and recommendations for implementation of the Plan to the 2025 Legislature, providing staff support including any meetings that may have to be in accordance with Chapter 92, and writing and printing the Plan. These duties will require the Department to redirect the already severely diminished professional staff resources away from the State’s highest priority of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assist in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and export.

The Department is very concerned that the Working Group and the Plan not become an academic exercise with no meaningful impact on the State’s highest priorities of increasing the economic viability of existing agricultural businesses and assisting in the establishment of new ones in direct support of increasing local food self-sufficiency and exports.

Thank you for the opportunity to present our testimony.



Email: communications@ulupono.com

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS
Friday, April 12, 2024 — 10:00 a.m.

Ulupono Initiative supports SCR 129 SD1, Requesting the Department of Agriculture to Establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group to Develop an Interagency Food Systems Plan.

Dear Chair Gates and Members of the Committee:

My name is Micah Munekata, and I am the director of government affairs at Ulupono Initiative. We are a Hawai'i-focused impact investment firm that strives to improve the quality of life throughout the islands by helping our communities become more resilient and self-sufficient through locally produced food, renewable energy, clean transportation choices, and better management of freshwater resources.

Ulupono supports SCR 129 SD1, which requests the Department of Agriculture to establish a Sustainable Food Systems Working Group to develop an interagency Food Systems Plan.

The development of an interagency food systems plan can help achieve the state's goal of increasing local food production, while also creating more resilient communities, expanding the local workforce, and bolstering our local economy by decreasing our reliance on imported food. We need all efforts to uplift our local food producers and ensure the future of the agriculture industry in Hawai'i during this critical time, as highlighted recently by the pandemic and climate change related natural disasters.

Ulupono supports this measure to create and identify a plan for a viable and resilient local food economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

Micah Munekata
Director of Government Affairs

Investing in a Sustainable Hawai'i



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April 12, 2024

HEARING BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE & FOOD SYSTEMS

TESTIMONY ON SCR 129, SD1
REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A
SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN
INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN

Conference Room 325 & Videoconference
10:00 AM

Aloha Chair Gates, Vice-Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Miyamoto, Executive Director of the Hawai'i Farm Bureau (HFB). Organized since 1948, the HFB is comprised of 1,800 farm family members statewide and serves as Hawai'i's voice of agriculture to protect, advocate and advance the social, economic, and educational interests of our diverse agricultural community.

The Hawai'i Farm Bureau supports SCR 129, SD1, which requests the Department of Agriculture to establish a sustainable food systems working group to develop an interagency food systems plan.

The impacts of the COVID pandemic have highlighted the need to strengthen Hawai'i's food system to ensure greater resilience, food security, human health, and economic diversity and stability.

HFB suggests the following amendments to SCR 129, SD1.

(1) Extending the date for the Working Group to submit the interagency food systems plan and recommendations to the Legislature from before the 2025 Legislature to before the 2026 Legislature. This extension will provide the Working Group with sufficient time to conduct its activities effectively.

(2) Amending the date that the Working Group is dissolved from June 30, 2025 to June 30, 2026.

(3) Authorizing the Co-Chairs, by mutual agreement, to invite additional members to the Working Group as needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments and for your continued support of Hawai'i's agricultural community.



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Executive Officers

Gary Okimoto, Safeway Hawaii, *Chair*
Maile Miyashiro, C&S Wholesale Grocer, *Vice Chair*
Kit Okimoto, Okimoto Corp., *Secretary/Treas.*
Lauren Zirbel, HFIA, *Executive Director*
Paul Kosasa, ABC Stores, *Advisor*
Derek Kurisu, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Toby Taniguchi, KTA Superstores, *Advisor*
Joe Carter, Coca-Cola Bottling of Hawaii, *Advisor*
Eddie Asato, Pint Size Hawaii, *Immediate Past Chair*

LATE

TO: Committee on Agriculture

FROM: HAWAII FOOD INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
Lauren Zirbel, Executive Director

DATE: April 12, 2024
TIME: 10am
PLACE: Room 325

RE: REQUESTING THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP AN INTERAGENCY FOOD SYSTEMS PLAN.

Position: Support

The Hawaii Food Industry Association is comprised of two hundred member companies representing retailers, suppliers, producers, manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage related products in the State of Hawaii.

Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee,

HFIA is in support of this measure and the intent of the Sustainable Food Systems Working Group. We also understand the need to keep the group at a reasonable size in order to maximize its ability to take action.

We strongly believe that the effectiveness of the working group will be improved with representation from Hawaii's Food Industry. A representative from HFIA would provide high level industry knowledge and expertise to the group and we are glad to participate. It's also important to note that by including HFIA, the working group would gain access to a network of local retailers and suppliers, amplifying the impact of any initiatives the group takes.

HFIA's mission aligns with purpose of the working group - a robust, sustainable, and resilient food supply chain. We encourage the Committee to pass this measure and consider adding a food retailer or representative from HFIA to the group, and we thank you for the opportunity to testify.

LATE

SCR-129-SD-1

Submitted on: 4/11/2024 10:47:34 AM

Testimony for AGR on 4/12/2024 10:00:00 AM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Marian Huff	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e Chair Gates, Vice Chair Kahaloa, and Members of the Committee:

Legislative support for the development of an Interagency Food System Systems Plan for Hawai'i Nei is much needed at a time when the DOE Food Service Branch is overwhelmed financially and staffing-wise to continue without incurring growing debt that is now out-of-hand. SCR 129 SD1 could help the major entities involved unite to create an Interagency Food Systems Plan. The Plan should include at least the following: Ongoing training programs for food service staff, Input from the current Hawaii P-20 Partnerships for Education Agency that grew out of P-20, and input from our farm related entities: College of Tropical Agriculture, Ag Development Corporation, Hawaii State Department of Agriculture. Hawaii Farm Bureau, Hawaii Farmers Union, and Maui Cty Department of Agriculture.

Mahalo Nui for your Support!

Marian Huff